



MECKLENBURG COUNTY  
Health Department

**Health Advisory**  
**Non-Tuberculous Mycobacterium (NTM) Infections Associated with Devices**

The CDC has identified a need for increased vigilance for NTM infections by healthcare providers. [The FDA recently issued a Safety Communication on NTM infections associated with heater-cooler devices.](#) Healthcare providers should have increased suspicion for NTM infections among patients who have signs of infection and a history of cardiac surgery. When seeing patients, actions that providers should consider include:

- Assessment of NTM infection for patients who report signs or symptoms of infection and who have had undergone cardiac surgery within the previous 4 years
- Patients suspected to have an NTM infection should also be assessed for a history of cardiac surgery or exposure to a heater-cooler device. Note that other healthcare exposures such as injections, plastic surgery, and dialysis may also be associated with NTM infections and warrant consultation with public health authorities or reporting to the FDA.
- Order mycobacterial culture in patient who have undergone a cardiac procedure within the previous four years who present with signs of infection.
  - Patients with NTM infections following cardiac surgery have presented with a variety of clinical manifestations. Common examples include endocarditis, surgical site infection, and bacteremia. However, other clinical manifestations have included hepatitis, splenomegaly, and osteomyelitis.
  - Diagnosis can be difficult due to the non-specific presentation of illness, but it is important that providers maintain an index of suspicion in patients with a history of cardiac surgery. Consider arranging consultations with an infectious disease specialist. It is also important to obtain AFB cultures to increase the likelihood of identification of the organism as well as to obtain an AFB smear in order to have preliminary information while awaiting culture results.

Providers with concerns about potential infections associated with heater-cooler devices should contact the FDA, NC Division of Public Health (919-733-3419), or the Mecklenburg County Health Department (704-432-0871).